

SLIPPERY ELM

Ulmus rubra Muhl.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Red elm, Gray elm, Soft elm.

FORM: Usually 40-60 feet high with a diameter of 1-2 1/2 feet, occasionally 80 feet tall, bole usually short, soon breaking up into a number of large, spreading limbs forming a broad, open, flat-topped head.

BARK: Mature bark thick, rough, shallowly fissured, ashy-gray to dark reddish-brown, inner bark strongly mucilaginous.

TWIGS: Stout, somewhat scabrous roughened by the raised lenticels and leaf scars, ultimately dark grayish-brown.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, oval to obovate, 5-7 inches long, 2-3 inches wide, acuminate at apex, rounded and inequilateral at base, coarsely doubly serrate, dark green and rough papillose with impressed veins above, pale dense white hairy below.

FLOWERS: Appear before the leaves from separate flower buds, on short pedicels in crowded fascicles, calyx green, divided into 5-9 short, rounded, thin lobes, anthers dark red, stigmas reddish-purple.

FRUIT: A one-seeded, oval orbicular, short-stalked, pale green sarmara, 1/2-3/4 inch long, consisting of a flat seed surrounded by a wing; the fruit is hairy only over the seed.

WINTERBUDS: Alternate, terminal bud absent, leaf buds toward end of twig, ovate, bluntly acute, rusty tomentose, dark chestnut-brown, about 1/4 inch long, flower buds larger than the leaf buds, farther back on the twig.

WOOD: Hard, heavy, strong, coarse-grained, dark reddish-brown with paler sapwood.

USES: Landscaping, pulp. Historical uses: barrels, baskets, chairs, crates, twine, wheel hubs.

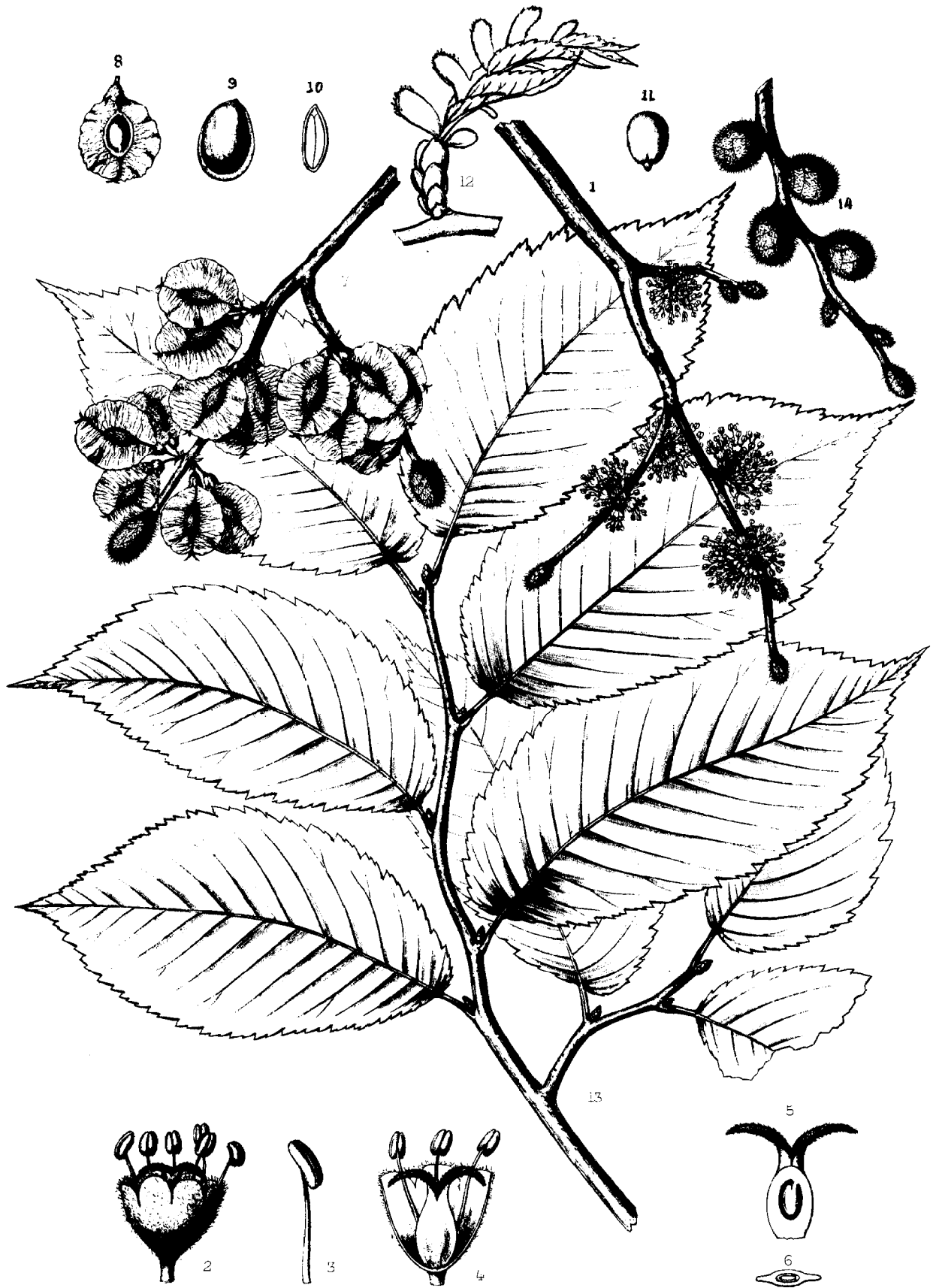
HABITAT: Stream banks, low fertile slopes, thrive on limestone outcrops.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Fragrant and mucilaginous inner bark; chestnut-brown buds covered with dusty brown pubescence; leaves are rough and coarsely serrate; fruit hairy only over the seed.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Very largely in the northern half of the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A flowering branch | 9. A seed |
| 2. A flower | 10. Vertical section of a seed |
| 3. A stamen | 11. An embryo |
| 4. Vertical section of a flower | 12. A young branch with unfolding leaves showing the accrescent bud scales and stipules |
| 5. Vertical section of a pistil | 13. A summer branch |
| 6. Cross section of an ovary | 14. A winter branch, the flower buds beginning to enlarge |
| 7. A fruiting branch | |
| 8. Vertical section of a fruit | |



***Ulmus rubra* Muhl.**